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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9213
INFO RUEHTA/AMEMBASSY ALMATY 9571
RUEHAH/AMEMBASSY ASHGABAT 1061
RUEHEK/AMEMBASSY BISHKEK 3775
RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 0881
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 1609
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 6060
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 6997
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 9176
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT 1745
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 2573
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 9961
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 7945

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 017256

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SUBJECT: NO CONFIDENCE VOTE ON PM AZIZ FAILS

REF: ISLAMABAD 17014

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter W. Bodde, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The government easily defeated an August 29 no-confidence vote against Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. Opposition leaders admitted they tabled the motion knowing it could not pass, but said the vote was intended to stake out a position against the government as an opening move in the campaign for late 2007 elections. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) On August 29, the National Assembly rejected a no confidence vote against Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. The opposition's 17-page charge sheet (and 500 pages of self-described "evidence") accused the PM of corruption or incompetence in many of the government's decisions of the past two years. The measure received only 136 votes of the 172 required. Since the opposition fell short, there was no need for government supporters to cast their votes.

¶3. (SBU) The case had been brought before the Assembly on August 23, but the August 27th death of Baloch tribal leader Nawab Bugti, not the specifics of the original motion, ultimately dominated the debate preceding the no confidence vote, not the specifics of the original motion (Septel).

¶4. (C) In separate conversations with Poloff the evening of the 29th, Senator Mian Raza Rabbani, the Senate's leader of the opposition and Deputy Secretary of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), and Ashen Iqbal, Central Information Secretary of the Nawaz Sharif faction of the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N), argued that the no confidence measure -- tabled in the certainty that it would not pass -- was a necessary action to stake out a position against the Musharraf government. Ashen Iqbal added that the no confidence vote was an opening move in the campaign for the late 2007 elections.

BODDE